

G O R E, Mayor.

*Jovis, decimo tertio die Novembris 1701,  
Annoq; Regis WILLIELMI  
Tertii, Angliæ, &c. Decimo tertio.*

**T**HIS Court doth desire Dr. Stan-  
hope to print his Sermon, preached  
at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, Lon-  
don, before the Lord Mayor, Aldermen  
and Citizens of this City, on the Fifth of  
this instant November.

A S H U R S T.

*The Case of Mistaken Zeal.*

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A  
**S E R M O N**

Preached at

**St. PAUL's Cathedral,**

*Novemb. 5. 1701.*

Before the Right H O N O U R A B L E

The Lord Mayor , Aldermen , and  
Citizens of *London.*

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By **G E O R G E S T A N H O P E, D. D.**  
Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majesty.

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L O N D O N,

Printed for RICHARD SARE at *Grays-Inn-Gate* in  
*Holborn,* M D C C II.





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To the Right Honourable  
Sir *WILLIAM GORE*, Knt.

Lord Mayor  
OF THE  
CITY of LONDON.

My LORD,

**T**hough Compliance with the Com-  
mand I have received for Pub-  
lishing this Sermon could not in  
common Decency be declined, yet I shall  
make no Scruple to acknowledge my Obe-  
dience the more willing, from an Appre-  
hension that the Point here treated of was  
never more necessary to be seriously consi-  
dered. And if it were so, Men would  
be



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## Epistle Dedicatory.

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be soon convinced, that the Publick Good, which even the most differing Parties pretend to agree in aiming at, is never to be attained, except the most honest and pious Intentions be seconded and carried on by proper and justifiable Measures. Zeal without Knowledge does the most of any thing resemble that Fire of Hell it self, which is described by Extremity of Heat without Light. Whereas the true and profitable Zeal is regulated by that Wisdom descending from above, which we are expresly taught to distinguish by these Marks, that it is first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, full of Mercy and good Fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. This is indeed the only Principle, that can render us truly happy, not only in the Next, but even in This World; useful to our Private or our Publick Interests. And therefore, whensoever it shall please  
God.

James iii. 17.

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## Epistle Dedicatory.

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God to bring this Nation under any Difficulties, we shall be naturally carried to wish for our Security, that in such Exigencies the Church may never want Store of Sons so Faithful, the Government, of Subjects so Loyal, nor this noble City, Magistrates so prudent and so deservedly in general Esteem, as all good Men do at this Day rejoice to find your Lordship.  
I am,

*My LORD,*

Your Lordship's most obedient  
humble Servant

*George Stanhope.*

Epistle Dedicatory.

And to the most noble and illustrious  
Council, we shall be very much obliged to  
send for our Service, and in such Ex-  
ercise, the Council, and in such Ex-  
ercise, the Council, the Government of  
Subjects to Loyalty, not this noble City, but  
affection to present and to be ready in  
General Session, in all good, and in  
this Day rejoice to find your Lordship.

My LORD,

Your Lordship's most obedient  
humble Servant

George Stanhope.



## St. JOHN XVI. 2.

----- *Yea the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you,  
will think that he doth God service.*

**O**UR Blessed Lord, who did himself condescend to feel the infirmities of Humane Nature, had a very tender regard to them in his Disciples. He knew, how far our proper Strength is from being a match for Terrours and Temptations; And therefore, in this parting Discourse, he promises those supernatural Instructions, Assurances, and Encouragements of the Holy Spirit, which might make good that Title of the *Comforter*, whereby we find him here so frequently distinguished. But yet it often happens, that Reason, even when thus supported by Grace, is not always successful in Spiritual Conflicts; because sometimes Calamities surprise us, and double our danger by the suddenness of their Assaults. The Enemy is got within our Quarters, before ever we suspected his Approach; and his Force upon such Occasions is not of more formidable Consequence, than is our own Confusion. For prevention of this mischief, it was not the least instance of our great Master's kindness, that he gave his Servants timely warning, what hardships they must expect to encounter in the discharge of their Duty. *These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended,* says he, (Verse the *First*.) When he had thus awaken'd in them just apprehensions of Evils to come, that so they might stand collected within themselves, and draw all their Forces of Reason and Religion together, and be constantly in a posture of Defence; then he proceeds to open the Scene, and shews  
B them

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them the Two great Adversaries they had to engage, and to try their courage upon, *Ignominy* and *Cruelty*. *They shall put you out of their Synagogues*, says the former part of this Verse ; there's the *Ignominy*. Yea, they shall *kill you*, says my Text ; there's the *Cruelty*.

The Former of these plainly respects the Censures of the *Jewish* Church : But in taking away the Lives of these good Men, every Nation should join. *Jews* and *Gentiles* were all disposed to this ; and, for fear Humanity and good Nature should interpose in their favour, Religion, we are told here, should be laid hold on as a pretence to excuse, nay to justify, nay to recommend, nay even to sanctify their Venom and Rage. Men might differ widely in other Notions, but in this of a meritorious Barbarity to the Christians All should conspire. Whosoever slew a Disciple of the Holy *Jesus*, it was universally agreed, that he did *ἀσχεῖαν προσφέρειν Θεῷ*, as the Text most emphatically terms it, that is, that in shedding this devoted Blood he offer'd up a choice and most acceptable Sacrifice, and perform'd a very extraordinary and signal piece of Service to the God he worshipped.

It were most heartily to be wished, that this Imagination had been confined to the Enemies of Christianity in common, and expired with the Times of the Primitive Persecutions. But, in regard we find by sad Experience, that the same mistaken Principle runs through every Age ; and Christians of different Denominations and Opinions are too often transported by it to furious Heats and great Bitterness against each other : Since, when Factions and Conspiracies are formed in the State, or Schisms made in the Church, the great disturbers of our Peace make Zeal for God their constant Cry, and think to shelter their most irregular Behaviour under this Answer, that they act according to their Consciences : Since the Fifth of *November*, above all other Days, stands in the *English* Calendar, an indelible Monument,

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ment of the unwearied, but (God be praised, still unsuccessful) Attempts animated by the wicked Principle foretold in my Text: I could not but think the opportunity allowed me here, could not be more usefully employed, than in examining this Case, which the Words before you, and the too common Errour contained in them, render so necessary at all times, so seasonable especially at this time, to be diligently examined and rightly understood. And that is, *What judgment we are to make of a mistaken Zeal, whether it excuse the Persons acted by it, or at least how far it will bear one out, in the Designs and Actions that are truly owing to it.*

Now, to proceed in this Matter as clearly and as briefly as I can, I shall not entangle You or my Self in the dark and subtile Speculations of the Schools; but rather chuse a Method more suitable to the nature of such a Discourse as this; and carry on my Enquiry by the help of One most remarkable Example, which will reach every Circumstance that can be of any weight in the Question now before us.

We read in the Book of *Acts*, what havock St. Paul once made of the Church, what *Threatnings and Slaughter* he was continually *breathing out against them*. The Character he gives of himself is this, "That \* He persecuted that way unto the Death, binding and delivering into Prisons both Men and Women. That He gave his Voice against their Lives, often compelled them to blaspheme, and being *exceedingly mad against them*, persecuted them even to strange Cities. For a Vindication of these furious Proceedings he boasts to the *Galatians*, "That † he † Galat. i. "had profited in the *Jews* Religion above his Equals; <sup>14.</sup> "and was more exceedingly zealous of the Traditions of the Fathers: And before King *Agrippa* this is his Apology, \* *I verily thought with my self, that I ought to do many things contrary to the Name of Jesus of Nazareth.* \* Acts xxvi. 9.



Now the difficulty of coming to a right understanding in this Point may seem indeed rather increas'd, and the Case left in greater confusion, by the very different Accounts which St. Paul gives of himself in Scripture. For, as if upon This Occasion too he thought it his duty to become *all things to all Men*, You find him one while pleading to *Ananias*, \* *Men and Brethren, I have lived in all good Conscience before God until this day*; and yet, writing at another time to his Son *Timothy*, he stigmatizes the Man of that good Conscience, with the scandalous Characters of \* *Blasphemer, Persecutor, Injurious and Chief of Sinners*. Sometimes we have him humble almost to Ostentation, coining new words to express his own Vileness; styled by himself *ἐλαχιστότης πάντων ἢ ἁγίων*, \* *less than the least of all Saints*; Frankly acknowledging to the *Corinthians*, that he was no better than an Abortion, \* *One born out of due time, The least of the Apostles, Not meet to be called an Apostle, because he persecuted the Church of God*. And yet the same St. Paul to the same *Corinthians*, at other times, bearing up in competition with the best of them. *Am not I an Apostle? I suppose I am not a whit behind the very chiefest Apostles*. And, as if in all this he had rather diminished than arrogated too much to himself, even claiming a Preference before the rest of his Brethren; *Are they Ministers of Christ? I speak as a Fool, I am more*; and, *I laboured more abundantly than they all*.

\* Acts  
xxiii. 1.

\* 1 Tim. i.  
13, 15.

\* Ephes.  
iii. 8.

\* 1 Cor.  
xv. 8, 9.

\* 1 Cor. ix.  
1. 2 Cor.  
xi. 5, and  
23. 1 Cor.  
xv. 10.

And now, *Quo teneam vultus mutantem?* Who can tell from hence, where to fix or what to pronounce? How shall we acquit that Blasphemer, or condemn this good Conscience; How commend the Zeal of the Apostle, and yet blame that of the Persecutor, if we will make St. Paul consistent with himself, and allow, (as the Truth most certainly is,) that he was acted with the self-same Zeal for the Service of God in both Capacities? This is that difficulty,

difficulty, which I shall now bring to a closer View, and, by considering the several Branches of it distinctly, will attempt to render it of some significancy and use to us, both for reconciling the intricacies of *St. Paul's Case*, and for directing our Judgments in other Cases of the like nature.

To this purpose, I beg you will attend to the *Four* following Particulars.

1. *First*, That throughout *St. Paul's* whole Conduct, there is not the least appearance of any Deceit or Double-dealing, not any Perverseness or Obstinacy of Spirit. From his Apologies to the *Galatians* and King *Agrippa*, we may plainly gather strong Prejudices from Custom and Education; An extraordinary deference for the Law of *Moses*, and an impatience of any contradiction to that Law. He wanted no inclination for the Service of God and the Truth, but stood up in Defence of the *Jewish* Religion, because he thought it to be the Truth; and set himself in Opposition to the Christians upon this very account, that it seem'd to Him an Imposture, and destructive of the Truth. Consequently *St. Paul* would have done better, had he but known better: And so the Defect lay not precisely in his Will, but chiefly in his Understanding. Now the bent and intention of the Will being that main thing which renders every Action formally Good or Evil; and the Dictates of a Man's Conscience being the next and immediate Guide, which the Person at that present time is to be directed by; from hence it is, that *St. Paul* justified himself before the High-Priest; and his Conscience might in this qualified sense, be truly styled a Good Conscience. For it guided him according to the best Light it had then received from the Judgment; and that Guidance he readily and sincerely followed. Thus, what-

whatever Offences *St. Paul* was drawn into upon this account, they did not proceed from any Prevarication, but purely from want of more perfect Instruction; and so his Persecuting the Church of Christ, cannot be esteemed a Sin of Wilfulness or Presumption, but was truly and properly a Sin of Ignorance.

2. But, *Secondly*, It must be remembred upon this Occasion, that even between these Sins there is a difference to be made; and that, as in other respects, so especially with regard to the Object of this Ignorance. The School-men, who, to give them their due, seldom let any thing pass without a Distinction, must be confess'd in this case to have a very just one; which they call *Ignorance in Universals*, and *Ignorance in Particulars*: So termed, because the *Former* relates to the General Rules for Men's Actions, and the *Latter* to the Circumstances of each single Action by it self. The Man that knows not what he does is Ignorant; and He that knows not what he ought to do is Ignorant too; But yet these two Persons are not ignorant of the same thing, nor in the same manner, nor with the same proportion of Guilt. When *Abimelech* took *Sarah*, and knew not that she was *Abraham's* \* Wife, God admitted his Excuse and his Integrity, so far as the charge of Adultery was concerned; Because he was ignorant of a material Circumstance, which altered the quality of the Fact it self. But when *Israel* knew \* not God and his Will, their Country, *Isaiah* tells us, was laid desolate, their Cities burnt with Fire; And all this, because Theirs was Ignorance in point of Law and Duty. In *St. Paul's* Case, though there may seem to have been a mixture of both these; Partly of the *Fact*, as he quite mistook the Persons and the Cause he persecuted, yet the ignorance of the *Law* had plainly the stronger influence upon him. *He verily thought*  
with

\* Gen. xx. 6.

\* Isa. i.



with himself, that he ought to do many things contrary to the Name of Jesus of Nazareth. His therefore was Ignorance in point of Duty, and that rendred his Fault so much the worse. For,

3. *Thirdly*, Every Sin is aggravated to the Committer of it, as it was more easy for that Person to have avoided that Sin. And consequently, all Ignorance must needs involve the Man in a degree of Guilt, proportionable to the Means of knowing and doing better afforded to that Man in particular. This is the main reason, why Ignorance of the *Fact* excuses, and Ignorance of the *Law* does not; Because very material Circumstances relating to the *Fact* cannot many times be fully known; But the *Law* lyes plain and open; It offers it self freely to every Man's Consideration; It is published on purpose that it may be known; And till it be in a condition of being known, it cannot have the force of a Law. Now the exercising so many Barbarities as St. Paul did upon Persons of a Principle different from his own, was an inhumane and very sinful thing *in it self*: And, if the Religion he so fiercely vindicated had been impartially look'd into, it might have appeared, that there was no ground for such Proceedings upon the account of this Difference in particular; and that made it a very grievous Sin to Him too. The *Jewish* Law is the Foundation upon which the Gospel is built; And Jesus and his Disciples, who carried up that Superstructure, were so far from propagating a Doctrine which corrupted the Law; that all they taught was that very Fulness and Perfection of it, which the Mosaical Dispensation stood in need of, which the Prophets had long promised, and the Faithful eagerly expected. Thus that mighty Proficiency in the Law, of which St. Paul boasts, did but  
add

add to his Offence. For the better he was acquainted with that Law, the more obvious these things, when fairly considered, would have been to him. And hence it is, that he laments his Unhappiness, and loads himself with Guilt, in all the severe Terms, that argue the sincerest Humiliation, and deepest Remorse. He never mentions the Blessing of his Conversion without some transport of Thankfulness and Joy; And in one of his Raptures tells his Son *Timothy*, that the Mercy of God did *ὑπερπλεονάζειν* towards Him;

\* 1 Tim. i. 14. Ascribing it to the Grace, the \* *Abundant*, nay the exceeding abundant Grace of God in Christ Jesus. He re-  
 \* 1 Tim. i. 16. presents himself so vile, as to be made a \* *Pattern* of all God's long Suffering to them that should hereafter believe. Like some abandoned Wretch, to whom a Prince extends his Mercy beyond all Hopes, and to the surprise of all Mankind, that the blackest Offenders, after such an instance, might have no Temptation to despair of his Clemency.

4. *Fourthly* and *Lastly*, Though St. Paul's Ignorance did not acquit him of Guilt, because it might have been remedied; Yet this was a considerable Abatement to his Sin, that it proceeded from Ignorance. For all Ignorance, which is not palpably gross and affected, is not altogether a Fault, but in some measure a Misfortune. We find our Blessed Saviour upon the Cross, alledging this as an Argument proper to incline God to Pity, in behalf of those very

\* Luke xiii. 34. *Jews* that crucified him. \* *Father*, says he, *forgive them, for they know not what they do*. Yet They were punish'd notwithstanding Their ignorance, and St. Paul was pardoned by reason of His: For so he professes  
 \* 1 Tim. i. 13. in his Epistle to *Timothy*, \* *I obtain'd Mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief*. He was not disobedient



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dient to the heavenly Vision, but immediately answered to the first Call, \* *Lord, What wilt thou have me* \* Acts ix. 6. *to do?* But the *Jews* had Miracle upon Miracle, Precept upon Precept, and still Their return was That of the ungracious Subjects in the Parable, \* *We will* \* Luke xix. 14. *not have this Man to Reign over us.* He wanted Light, because it did not discover it self fully to him, nor was he rightly prepared to receive it: Like Men who are kept long in the dark, or have a blemish in their Sight. They wanted Light, because they shunn'd and hated it; Like those lovers of Darkness, who, when the Sun shines bright, shut him out, or wink hard against him. The Disposition of His Mind was right, but some violent Prejudices had corrupted his Reason, and got possession of his Judgment. When those Scales too fell off from the Eyes of his Mind, and he saw all things clearly; Then he evidenced the Uprightness of his Intention, by a most indefatigable Diligence and active Zeal, by employing his natural Courage and warmth of Temper as vigorously in Defence of Christ, as ever he had done before in Defiance of him. And in this regard it is, (both as to his Commission and Call received immediately from Heaven, and his own faithful Execution of it,) that he equals himself with the other Apostles, declaring, *He laboured more abundantly than they All.* This Sincerity and Zeal it was, that rendred so excellent a Person, so long and so unhappily misled, a proper Object of Pardon and Compassion first, and then † a † Acts ix. 15. *Chosen Vessel, to bear his Master's Name, before the Gentiles, and Kings, and the Children of Israel.*

And now, after having so largely discussed the Instance of our Great Apostle, there will not remain any mighty Difficulty in coming to a tolerable Decision



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cision of the Case propounded. The whole State whereof, I think, may be comprised in these few general Conclusions.

1. *First*, A Man's proposing the most noble End, and prosecuting it with never so sincere an Intention, never so fervent a Zeal, cannot be sufficient to justify his Proceedings, if the Measures and Means made use of for compassing that End are unlawful. St. Paul was exceeding zealous of the Law; A Law that had been given by God himself, yet was he, notwithstanding his Design to defend Religion, a *Blasphemer, a Persecutor, and Injurious*.

2. *Secondly*, If these Methods be really sinful, and might be known to be so, if Men were not partial, or otherwise wanting to their own due Information; It is not any present Persuasion of their Lawfulness, not any Warrant or sanguine Encouragement of a mistaken Conscience, that can render them lawful to Us. St. Paul thought verily that he ought to do what he did, and yet when he came to a better sense of things, he makes no Scruple to style himself the *Chief of Sinners* for having done it. To the Law and to the Testimony, as *Isaiah* says in another case; These are the Standard of Right and Wrong: And things that are fixt in their own Nature, as the Measures of moral Good and Evil are, cannot be changed by our Opinion of them; Nor will the Fact be in it self better or worse, because the Doer apprehends it otherwise than in truth it is. A Sin of Ignorance it is indeed, and that extenuates the Offence; But a Sin still it is, except right Reason or Scripture allow it; And consequently Ignorance or Misapprehension will not bear that Man out, who acts contrary to the Rule of his Duty, though at the same time he

he act in perfect agreement with the Dictates of his own Mind.

3. *Thirdly*, Some Advantage however there may be gathered from hence, which is, that, such Sins being partly involuntary, this Ignorance may incline the Mercy of God towards the Offender. For there is always ground to hope, that He who knows our Frailties will look upon them with a very tender compassionate Eye, and rather pity than punish our Weakness. *St. Paul obtained Mercy, because he did it ignorantly in unbelief.*

4. But then we must not forget to take this along with us, *Fourthly*, That, although thus much may be hoped, yet it is more than can be depended upon. Ignorance may *incline*, but it does not *engage* the Mercy of God. The Law lyes open, and we must learn it at our peril; God hath not by the Gospel-Covenant obliged himself to such gracious Condescensions to them who do not; Nor is it any Argument, because he vouchsafed to convert and enlighten *St. Paul* by a Miracle, that he will go out of the common way to every one, who, when he hath transgressed through Ignorance, wipes his Mouth and says he hath done nothing amiss. The Apostle, you see, was so far from supporting himself with any such vain Imagination, or esteeming his Conversion an effect of Justice; that he extols it as the *overflowing of God's exceeding abundant Grace, with Faith, and Love, which is in Christ Jesus.*

5. *Fifthly*, We learn likewise from hence, upon what terms such Persons are allowed to hope for this Mercy; which are, provided they submit to the Truth when it offers it self to them, and give all possible diligence to make reparation for their former Errours,



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and all the Mischiefs owing to them. St. Paul was not disobedient to the Heavenly Vision, but replied presently, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* And when he had received the Grace of God, *he laboured more abundantly than all the Apostles.*

So poor Encouragement appears upon the whole Matter, for a Mistaken though Well-meaning Zeal; So great the hazard and danger it involves Men in; So very little, so very uncertain the Comforts and Advantages to be expected from it; And all this too, supposing the most favourable Circumstances that the Case can possibly admit. But, I appeal to this Day, whether it deserves to be thought any breach of Charity, to suspect, that too too many who imitate St. Paul's Fervency, will at last be found to want St. Paul's Integrity. And, if where the Intention is undissembled, and the Ignorance unaffected, a Man so hardly escape; Or, if he do, that such a one stands a Living Monument of signal and uncovenanted Grace, Where, then, Ah! where shall Those ungodly Wretches appear, who, either do not know, because they will not see; or carry the Cross of Christ for a Banner to Avarice, and Blood, and Lust; Who prophane and prostitute this or that Religion to purposes that are a Contradiction to all Religion; Whose Ambition and Faction is all their Zeal, and whose Gain is their only Godliness?

The Point it self being thus settled, I desire to leave it upon you with Two or Three Practical Inferences, and so conclude.

I. Now, *First*, From what hath been resolved concerning the Nature and the Danger of a misguided and indiscreet Zeal, we are very naturally carried to consider, of what mighty Importance it is to every Man, to have



have his Conscience rightly informed. When God hath given us a Rule to walk by, and hath declared, he will take a strict account of our Actions, according to their Conformity or Disagreement with this Rule; it highly concerns us to make his Laws the constant measure of our Designs and Behaviour. To this purpose we ought to examine every thing by that Standard, and to proceed with Sobriety and Impartiality, with much leisure and great exactness in such Examination. The plausible pretences of Church and Cause, of Liberty, and Property, and Religion, will not bear us out, if we be carried away by Heat and Prepossession, by Faction and Party, by Enthusiastick and wild Imaginations. And yet all this may sometimes happen to be the case of very well-intending Men; from the inveterate Prejudices of an unhappy Education, from the particular Complexion of their Minds, or the warmth of an eager and blind Zeal. But God requires, that Reason and Religion should be the Compass for all his Servants to steer by; And that These should be so far from being born down by Humour, or Passion, or Interest; as to moderate, and subdue, and bring them all into entire Obedience. And He, who suffers himself to be transported into any sort of Wickedness, which in his coldest Blood he cannot fairly justify, is like a Sailour without his Card; He makes Shipwreck of Faith and a good Conscience, and will be sure one day to pay dear for that Rashness and Inconsideration, which no Goodness of Intention can make a sufficient Atonement for.

2. *Secondly*, This shews us the horrible Mischiefs of violent and obstinate Prejudice. There is no Opinion so absurd, but Men so possess'd may be brought to believe and embrace it; No Crime so black, but they

they may confidently engage in it, and yet all the while think themselves in the right. And the reason of this is very obvious and evident. Which is, that such People, when they set themselves to consider, begin always at the wrong End. For, instead of coming to their Rule with Minds open and unbiaſſed, and free to entertain any Truth that ſhall diſcover it ſelf to them; They quite contrary bring their own Notions and Impreſſions along with them. Theſe they lay down as firſt and unconteſtable Principles, and reſolve to admit of nothing for Juſt and True, except ſo far as it agrees with Theſe. Hence it is, that they ſtretch and bend the Rule, to bring it to their own crooked Affections and Deſigns; And as ſome crafty Rebels heretofore have found out an Expedient to make War upon the King's Perſon by the King's Authority; ſo many perverſe Interpreters of Scripture have frequently produced God's own Word in vindication of the moſt Ungodly Practices. Of how malignant Influence ſuch Proceedings are, not only to the Parties themſelves but to Others, how deſtructive of Peace and good Order, and every Benefit of Society and Government, plentiful Experience hath convinced Mankind to their Coſt. And what indeed can be expected better from ſuch Preachers and ſuch Principles, as perſuade Men, that the worſt and moſt exorbitant Practices may be ſanctified by a Good End and Pious Intentions? Wretched Uſurpers of the Name of *Jeſus*! Like Him in no One Circumſtance, but that of coming not *to ſend Peace on Earth but rather Diſſion*; Nay, not like him even in that, when rightly underſtood; For Swords and publick Ruptures were only the accidental Event of His Coming, but they ſeem to be the very End and Purpoſe of Theirs: Theſe



These Holy Missionaries divide that they may devour; and from the Ignorance and Credulity of the People, take advantages of kindling such a furious Zeal, as shall set whole Kingdoms in a Flame; as blows the Coals, till all the soft Relentings of Humane Nature are consumed, and makes their Profelytes ten times more the Children of Hell, by a false hope of ensuring Heaven to themselves. Instead of correcting the Extravagancies of Cruelty and Injustice, by Christian Considerations of mutual Forbearance subjection to Governours and meek Suffering; rendring their Instruments more head-strong and turbulent, more inflexibly barbarous and brutish, upon the pretence of serving a Church or a Cause, and for fear they should seem to do the Work of the Lord negligently. Deliver us, Good God, from such dangerous Delusions; and whenever thou thinkest fit to scourge us for our Sins, let us fall into Thy Hands, for Thy Mercies are great; And not into the Hands of Men: Least of all into the Hands of such Men, as think *they do thee Service* by our Destruction. For when Blood is esteemed a Sacrifice, and Persecution commences Principle, Compassion from thenceforth becomes a Crime: And the tenderest Mercies of a Zeal thus inflamed will be sure to prove the very Extremity of Cruelty.

3. But, *Thirdly*, Let not this disorderly Zeal of our very bitterest Enemies, or the most dreadful Consequences of it, extinguish our Charity for such mistaken Men. These things call for the observance of those Commands, to *bless them that curse us, and pray for them who despightfully use us and persecute us*. We may and ought to take all prudent Methods of guarding our selves against the mischiefs of a Set of Principles, that would, if suffered and pursued, lay all



in ruin and confusion; But we must never let our Fears or our Resentments transport us to the like Extravagance which we condemn in others. And therefore, while we are providing for our own Safety, we must not forget that which would be our surest Defence; The securing Providence on our side, by depending upon his Blessing upon all fair and lawful Means of Safety; Daily Addresses to God, *that he would bring into the way of Truth such as have erred and are deceived*; And inviting all such over to our Persuasion by that Christian Meekness and Gentleness of Temper, which may assert the Credit of Religion, and prove that God is in us of a Truth. Which last Reflexion leads me to a

4. *Fourth* Inference, no less necessary than any of the former, and that is, The unreasonableness of suffering our Minds to be prejudiced against things profitable and good in themselves, upon the account of their being sometimes abused to very ill Purposes. How great a Madness would it be, to form a Judgment of those Creatures God gives us for the Sustenance and Refreshment of our Bodies, from the miserable effects they have upon some Men, who ruin their Health by Luxury and Riot? And the Folly is not less, when we think meanly of a Divine Institution, in its own Nature excellent and useful, for the Hypocrisy or the Errours of Them, who turn Liberty into Licentiousness, and Faith into Faction. And this I cannot but think a very seasonable Caution, because the present Contempt of Religion in this sinful Age may be thought in some measure owing to a just abhorrence of the exorbitant Practices of Men, who have made more than ordinary pretences to Religion. This the Devil seems to have taken hold of for carrying ill-disposed

disposed Minds to a very wicked Extreme ; by tempting them who wish there were no such thing, to think that indeed there is not. And too plausible a Temptation it is, when they see *Conscience* and *Zeal* taken up as Words only to amule the Vulgar, and to cloak Designs inconsistent with either revealed Truths or common Honesty. It is indeed a horrid Scandal, when Men profess to advance or to secure the Interests of Religion, by acting a part that is a contradiction to mutual Faith and all Religion. But were not Religion in it self universally acknowledged to be Good, the mere Zeal for it could not make so powerful an Impression ; And, whatever becomes of the *Means*, yet it is plain even such deluded Men are satisfied in the Worth and Excellence of the *End*. But since This, like all other good things, requires an honest and prudent use of it ; the Indignation ought not to fall upon the thing it self, but upon Them who corrupt it, in the abuse. Sufficient to such Men is their own Condemnation, and a heavy Condemnation no doubt they incur, whose Examples wound its Honour, and expose it to the Scorn of them who wish it ill, and rejoice in all plausible Occasions to traduce and undermine it. But this does by no means evacuate the Wisdom of God, or the Force of Truth, or the Benefits of the Gospel. The Doctrines of the Meek and Holy *Jesus*, are a System of Peace and Order, of Justice and Charity ; But since those Doctrines are so framed, as to correct indeed but not compel our Wills, there remains still a possibility for Ignorance and Corruption to render them Instruments of Division and Confusion. They who truly answer the intent of this Gospel, and have the *Power* as well as the *Form* of Godliness, will be sure to shew forth the

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Works



Works of a good Conversation, in a Spirit of Meekness and Love. But, while Men continue to be Men, they must have it in their power, to turn that *which should have been for their Wealth into an occasion of Falling*. And the Justice of Providence is no way concerned to prevent this, since God knows how to bring Light out of Darkness, to turn even the Sins of Men to his own Glory; and hath determined to judge every one of us at last, according to the Improvement of those Good things which we might have abused, but did not; or the misemployment of those, which we had sufficient warning and direction to make a right and beneficial use of, but would not. All which, I should think, cannot but convince any reasonable Man, how hard, and how absurd it is, that Religion it self should suffer in our esteem, Either for the ignorance of Them who mean honestly but do not rightly understand it; or for the Hypocrisy and empty Boasts of Them who would be thought to have it most, but in reality have it not.

And this now leads me very naturally in the *Last* place, to conclude with the more immediate Business of this Day. A Day particularly auspicious to the *English Church and Nation*; and doubly signalized by the repeated Preservation of the Reformed Religion and our Civil Liberties. First, By the strange and seasonable Discovery of a most barbarous and hellish Treason, whereby the King and Royal Branches, the Flower of our Clergy, Nobility and Gentry, assembled in Parliament, were marked out for the Slaughter, and intended to be made a Burnt-Sacrifice by that blind fiery Zeal I have been speaking of. The Horrour of so many precious Lives destroyed at once by an unseen Blow: The dismal Confusion of so many immortal



mortal Souls hurried into Eternity, without any warning of their sudden Change, nay without leisure for so much as *one Lord have mercy upon me* at the last Gasp: The Darkness, and Misery, and general Consternation, which must have covered the Face of the Publick, are now no more to be express'd than they could then have been prevented, had not the watchful Providence of God in a most Critical Minute interposed. These things *we have heard with our Ears, and our Fathers have declared unto us the noble Works God did in their Days and in the Old Time before us.* But Others of the like Nature our own Eyes have seen. Bold and Illegal Attempts, to throw down our Fences, and root up our Vineyard; and the worst of Slaveries endeavoured to be introduced, partly by a secret and subtle, partly by a High Hand. The Resentments of those who profess to be Champions for Liberty, and the Power of a Prince unhappily misled, made Instruments to lay a Yoke upon our Necks, which neither our Forefathers nor We were able to bear. And here again the same good Providence was eminently conspicuous, by defeating the Counsels of our Adversaries; and ordering Matters so, that our Safety should come not from our Own, but from a nobler and better Hand: A Safety bearing Date from this once more prosperous Day, And that so innocent, that the Generality of the Nation had nothing left to do, but merely not refuse their own Happiness. If then our Properties as a People, and our Reformation as a Church; If the Rights of a Monarchy independent on the usurped Supremacy of Rome, and the Allegiance of Subjects free from the Controul of Foreign Tyranny; If the undisturbed Exercise of a

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Religion

Religion truly Rational, and Primitive, and Pure, and the Regular execution of Laws, most just, and wise, and beneficial; If the Privileges we claim by our Statutes and Customs, as Natives, and the yet more sacred and inviolable Rights belonging to us as Christians; If Sacraments unmain'd, and Decency void of Idolatry and Superstition; If Prayers edifying, because intelligible to our People; If (which is most of all desirable,) the Scriptures freely communicated, and ready access to those Wells of Salvation, not only allowed but enjoined and urged to every Soul that thirsts after Righteousness; If these, I say, be Comforts and Advantages, worthy our Notice and Esteem; then have we abundant matter of Joy, and Praise, of Thanks and Wonder: Then can no *English* Man or Protestant think any Honours or Solemnities too great, too lasting for a Day which seems upon so many accounts marked out to Honour; so fruitful in Blessings to these Kingdoms, to the Reformed Religion, to *Europe* in general, as is the most deservedly, and I will add too, the most devoutly to be, celebrated *Fifth of November*.

I do not therefore call upon you to remember the Blessings of this Day, we must even forget our selves not to do that. Or, were we (which God forbid we ever should be,) abandoned to a Spirit of Ingratitude base enough to neglect them; Yet even so, 'tis but too plain, the restless Attempts of our Enemies fail not to refresh our Memories; and our repeated Dangers from the same quarter will not suffer us to forget them. But in order to discharge the Duty of this place, 'tis fit I put you in mind after what manner they should be remember'd. And will the Ceremonies



monies (think we) of an Aniversary Thanksgiving suffice for this purpose? No. These alone are but an empty Pomp. If we have a just sense of our Preservation, we shall be careful to walk worthy of it, and not contract any such guilt as we have reason to fear may forfeit and deprive us of these Benefits. We then are thankful for our Civil Liberties, when we apply all prudent Methods for the Common Security, when (Faction, and Party, and Prejudice, apart) we heartily unite in Charity and Peace; and all move like a Body animated with the same Soul, to save our selves against all Breach of Publick Faith, and every unjust Invasion of them: When with all possible Fidelity and Zeal, our Hearts, our Hands, our Fortunes, but especially our Prayers are constantly employed on the behalf of that Glorious Instrument of our Happiness, whom it hath pleased the Providence of God to set (and long may he sit) over us. We then, and only then, are thankful as we ought for our Religion still secure and firm; when we rest not in outward Forms or a false Estimate of our selves, as Professors of the best Doctrines; but give all diligence to express the peculiar Excellence of our Principles by the proportionably exemplary Purity of our Conversations. When we worship God in Truth and in the Beauty of Holiness; observe Justice in all our Dealings, Moderation to the Mistaken, Meekness towards our Enemies, Charity towards all Men: In a word, when we live as Christians, and love as Brethren. Such is our Doctrine, such consequently ought to be our Practice. To which, give me leave to say, No one thing would contribute more effectually, than the cutting off occasion from them who seek occasion



on. of Mischief against us, by laying aside all unreasonable Prejudices, and letting all those Heats go out and die, which have too long divided us from one another; By heartily joining in the Communion and Defence of that established Church, which frequent Experience hath shewn to be the best and most impregnable Bulwark of the Reformation. These are such Methods as might give us reasonable expectations that God will (and Oh that he may) continue and multiply his Mercies toward us; by lengthning out that most important Life of his Anointed, upon which the Security of what we already enjoy, and the Attainment of what we yet hope for, (and what indeed may we not hope from Him?) do (according to all humane Prospects) in so great a measure depend. Thus would our *Jerusalem* be a City at Unity it self, and when it is so, it will soon be the Joy and Wonder of the whole Earth. Thus might our Church and Country hope to see the accomplishment of that Prophetick Benediction of *Moses*, which the Deliverances of this Day will justify us in applying to our selves. *Happy art thou, O Israel, Who is like unto Thee? a People saved by the Lord, the Shield of thy help, and the Sword of thy excellency: Thine Enemies shall be found liars unto thee, and thou shalt tread upon their high places.* So be it to our *Israel*, O Lord, and let them prosper that love us; But let the wicked Conspiracies of as many as have evil will at *Sion*, continue to be like the untimely Fruit of a Woman, which never sees the Sun: That, whatever Evils the Malice and Subtlety of the Devil or Man worketh against us being brought to nought, and by the Providence of thy Goodness utterly dispers'd, we thy Servants being hurt by no Persecutions

may

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## *The Case of Mistaken Zeal.*

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23

*may evermore give thanks unto thee in thy holy Church  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

*To whom with the Father and Holy Spirit, Three  
Persons and One God be ascribed, as is most  
due, for the Blessings we this Morning are met  
to commemorate, and for all other his Mercies,  
all Honour, and Glory, Adoration and Thank-  
giving henceforth and for evermore. Amen.*

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**F I N I S.**

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30

The Case of the Jews

...in the holy Church...

...through Jesus Christ our Lord...

...to whom with the Father and Holy Spirit, Three Persons and One God, as it is taught...

...for the Blessing of this Morning and our...

...to whom with the Father and Holy Spirit, Three Persons and One God, as it is taught...

...for the Blessing of this Morning and our...

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